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C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 003115

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DEPT FOR EUR (DICARLO), D (SMITH), P (BAME), EUR/SCE (HOH,
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SUBJECT: BOSNIA MOVING FORWARD IN JOINING PFP

BOSNIA MOVING AHEAD WITH PFP PROCESS

¶1. (SBU) Bosnia received its formal invitation from the NATO Secretary-General to join the Partnership for Peace on

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December 7. Tri-Presidency members plan to travel to Brussels December 14, where Presidency Chairman Radmanovic will sign the Framework Document. With the help of NATO HQ Sarajevo, Bosnia's Presentation Document has been drafted and approved in principle by the Council of Ministers. The document has been forwarded to NATO for further review and comment before formal submission. The Presentation Document has been forwarded to the department separately.

LEVERAGING THE INVITE

¶2. (SBU) We have actively sought to leverage the Pfp invitation to encourage further progress on Bosnian defense reform and NATO support activities. On December 5 the Ambassador convened a meeting between NATO ambassadors to Bosnia and Tri-Presidency members to congratulate Bosnian authorities on the Pfp invitation and urge continued progress on defense reform and cooperation on war crimes issues. The Ambassador has sounded similar themes in recent press interviews, which have received wide coverage, highlighting Bosnia's successes to date in implementing elements of defense reform and the necessity to continue the reform agenda in order to further integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures. We plan to continue our pro-active outreach and use Pfp as a mechanism to drive our bi-lateral security agenda.

BOSNIAN LEADERS CONTINUE TO LAUD PFP

¶3. (SBU) In an otherwise contentious political climate, the Pfp invitation has had a unifying effect on the Bosnian leadership. Bosnian political leaders have consistently referenced the invitation in their public appearances and press statements, portraying Pfp as a historic and important step on the road to complete integration into NATO and the EU. Senior military leaders have told us that the invitation validates their efforts over the past two years in defense reform, and that they welcome the training and integration

opportunities Pfp will provide.

BOSNIAN-SERB MILITARY LEADERS SEE NEW OPPORTUNITIES WITH PFP

¶4. (C) We visited the Kozara Barracks in Banja Luka, the former headquarters of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) and future site of the Support Command and VI Infantry Brigade of the new Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to discuss the progress of defense reform and Pfp engagement plans. Senior military officers there, of Bosnian-Serb ethnicity, told us that they welcomed inclusion in Pfp and saw clear benefits for legacy VRS units. Brigadier Radovan Ilic, deputy Chief of Staff for the legacy VRS General-Staff, noted that VRS units had been barred from receiving U.S. training and equipment, a fact that has created a skills and capabilities gap between Federation and RS units in the new armed forces. Ilic stated that Pfp would bridge that gap, and that partnership activities would be focused on English language training programs, and joint military exercises to increase the inter-operability with NATO forces. Ilic told us that he hoped that a Pfp exercise would be held on RS territory in the near term.

COMMENT: PFP: A BRIGHT SPOT FOR BOSNIA

¶5. (C) Considering the continued deadlock over government formation and police reform, the good-will created and sustained by Pfp has been a recent bright spot in the Bosnian political scene. We will continue to use Pfp to focus Bosnians attention on the need to continue the reform agenda, and the substantial benefits of engagement with the Euro-Atlantic community. It is also becoming increasingly clear that political, though not senior military, leaders do not have a firm grasp on what Pfp means in concrete terms, or the responsibilities it entails. Continued outreach in this area will serve to inform the leadership of their new responsibilities within the Pfp framework.
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